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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7067
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 5156
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3728
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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS
MCC FOR S GROFF, D NASSIRY, E BURKE AND F REID

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/10/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)
SUBJECT: NORTHERN TAMILS LOSING FAITH IN THE LTTE

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr., for reasons 1.4(b,d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Ambassador met Reverend S. Jeyanesan, a Tamil priest from Batticaloa, in late April. Jeyanesan reported that there are 172,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) in Batticaloa, and that those who were sent back to Vakarai have been relocated, not resettled in their original homes. Jeyanesan recently traveled to Kilinochchi and said that most people in the Vanni do not support the LTTE, but are unable to leave the area. Many are being forced to join the fight. The Reverend said the reality for Tamils is that they have two problems, the government and the LTTE. His disillusionment with the LTTE reflects a growing sentiment among Tamils in the North and East and highlights the absence of legitimate political representation of the Tamil people. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Ambassador in late April met Reverend S. Jeyanesan, a Tamil priest from Batticaloa. Originally from Jaffna, Jeyanesan lived in Kilinochchi for 13 years and has lived in Batticaloa for the past 13 years. He regularly travels throughout the North and East and shared with the Ambassador his observations about the situation Tamils face in these areas.

¶3. (C) Jeyanesan reported that there are 172,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) in Batticaloa. He said that those who were sent back to Vakarai have been relocated, not truly resettled. The government has failed to provide basic services such as electricity to the town, and most people are still living in camps. He said that both the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the LTTE-breakaway Karuna group are regularly abducting children from the IDP camps and area orphanages. He suggested fencing the camps and placing guards at the entrance to help prevent abductions.

¶4. (C) Jeyanesan recently traveled to Kilinochchi. He told us most people in the Tiger-held Vanni do not support the LTTE, but are unable to leave the area. There is no food shortage, he said, because of a bumper rice harvest this year. Many of the Tamils being forced to fight for the LTTE

are actually "Up-Country" Tamils of Indian origin whose families moved to Kilinochchi a generation ago, thinking it would be a safe area. The LTTE has told people that they can either voluntarily give one family member to fight, or the LTTE will come and take two. Many people are attempting to flee through the forest to escape this fate, he said.

¶5. (C) The Reverend said that in his view, a military solution to the conflict may be a necessary evil. He said the reality for Tamils is that they have two problems, the government and the LTTE. The LTTE does not represent the interests of the Tamils and is now only concerned with protecting LTTE leader Prabhakaran and his top supporters, he said. He doubted that the LTTE would ever agree to a peaceful solution to the conflict.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: The Reverend's comments on life in the Vanni provide a glimpse into an area where we have limited access to information. His disillusionment with the LTTE reflects a growing sentiment among Tamils in the North and East and highlights the absence of legitimate political representation of the Tamil people.

BLAKE